

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, November 16, 2011.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.
Attorney - Fred Mason, Jr.; Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber;
Board Members - Louise Michaels, Milton Huston & George Kain
Association Representative – Eric Palmieri, President

Absent: Treasurer – Sandra Owens – excused

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:06 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

II. - Approval of the minutes from the October 20th meeting.

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the October 20th meeting. If there are no corrections, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Louise made a motion to accept the minutes. George seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously, with note of an abstention from the vote by Moderator Fogarty, due to his absence at the October 20th meeting.

III. – Approval of Bills:

A check register of bills to be paid was provided to all board members in their folder. Moderator Fogarty asked if there were any comments or questions on these expenses. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Jim made a motion to approve the bills. Louise seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. - Treasurer's Report:

Due to Sandy's absence there was no Treasurer's Report available for presentation.

V. - Tax Collector's Report:

Taxes receivable balance as of today's date is \$142,240.79.

Taxes collected in the month of October were \$2,250.03.

Third party billing was healthy in the month of October, \$9,837.67.

Kim provided individual binders containing copies of the Harmony Fire District Charter and By-Laws to each member of the board.

Last month the option for the district to take an interest in the tax sale property on Phillips Lane , Plat: 019 Lot: 042, was tabled until this month. At that time the board had asked Kim to forward the information regarding this parcel to Attorney Mason for his review and recommendation. Kim asked Attorney Mason if he could present his findings so a vote could be taken.

Before the discussion started Moderator Fogarty stated that due to the fact that his son's property abuts the property in question, he recused himself from it.

Attorney Mason stated that he had conferred with Attorney Tim Kane, former Gloucester Solicitor, regarding the issue since it was not his area of specialty. He stated he did not know enough about the property and did not feel comfortable giving any recommendation. George said he had had a conversation with Gloucester Tax Assessor Viviane Valentine and he was under the impression that the most recent purchaser of abutting property would have to provide access to landlocked property. He asked Attorney Mason if that was an accurate statement. Attorney Mason said he was not sure. Some discussion followed regarding the property and the districts options. Attorney Mason offered to do further legal work on the property, if that was what the board wanted. Louise stated due to the 60 day limitation to decide, we are kind of limited with our options now. Jim stated even if we do opt to pass, if someone decided to buy the property they would still have to satisfy our lien anyway. The board agreed to pass at this time.

George made a motion to pass on the option to take an interest in the Phillips Lane property, Plat: 019, Lot: 042, at this time. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously, with note of an abstention from the vote by Moderator Fogarty.

Ray asked if Kim knew how many foreclosure properties were included in our tax sale this year. Will anyone ultimately lose their properties? Kim stated that some of the parcels were in foreclosure and even trying to close short sales on the properties, she was not sure of individual property transfer details. Ray asked how that compared to last year and we did still collect 100% on what was owed to us though in the end, correct? Kim said that last year there were 6 parcels at the tax sale, of which 5 sold, 3 have since been redeemed. This year there were 5 parcels, of which 3 sold. And yes we collect 100% through the tax sale process, if they do not sell at the tax sale we will only collect when the property changes hands. Ray asked how the towns numbers compare to ours, he would assume they are similar. Kim stated that the town records are completely separate from hers and there would be no way for to know, unless she made a direct inquiry to the town tax collector. One instant where she has seen our collection on a parcel lag, where the towns levy was paid, was when the town tax bill is escrowed with the mortgage payment and the fire district tax bill is not. Taxpayers claim they were not aware of our bill and assumed the mortgage escrow took care of everything.

Jim made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. - Chief's Report:

At the end of October a Broadband Committee Meeting was held here at the station. John Visich, Milt and the Chief worked separately at another meeting of the proposal for submission. We are moving forward it.

The Promethean Activ Board has been installed in the Conference Room. We actually used it during Monday night's drill for hydraulics training. Ray asked if a presentation could be done

with it at the January meeting. Jim asked what is done to post messages now that the dry erase board is gone. The Chief said that there is a dry erase board still in use in the Radio Room and a cork board in the Break Room. Our goal is to keep the computerized Bulletin Board up and running continuously in the Radio Room as well. The Activ board will eliminate a lot of the devices currently in the corner of the Conference Room also. We will be starting the construction of the new trophy case and cabinet that will go in that corner soon. It will look a lot better, more organized.

On November 1st the Chief and Kim logged in to a Webcast titled “Private Sector Innovation for Emergency Communications” it was held in Washington DC. There were people from all over the country participating; police, fire and the public sector. It was quite interesting to hear what they were saying. This information feel right in line with what was discussed when the Chief attended the IAFC Symposium in the Sun this fall. He was talking to a fellow Fire Chief at the IAFC, explaining what we are trying to do in Harmony with our Broadband Plan, and he asked if the Chief had read the Key Note Speakers notes. Ironically that is what she was preparing to talk about, but just in the beginning stages. What we are doing, we are ahead of the curve. The Chief said it was very exciting to discover that fact.

Another Webcast that we logged into on November 10th was Social Media in Emergency Management: Transforming the Response Enterprise. These webcasts can be very informative.

Lt John Falco attended a 4 day Wilderness & Disaster Medicine training in Pinkham Notch, NH. He found the training very interesting and informative. It was also a great experience for the John to be able gain information to pass items learned along to the rest of our crew.

Maintenance work on our equipment is now being done in-house by Pvt. Tom Malott. He has already accomplished quite a bit, he is very talented and will save the district a lot of money on small repair items.

A donations of pot holders, oven sticks, etc. was made to the Gloucester Department of Human Services. These were extra fire prevention items that had been sitting in inventory and will now be put to good use. DHS will included these items in their Thanksgiving baskets for the elderly and residents in need.

The Firefighter I class will be finishing up in December. 6 crew members completing the class.

Jim asked how the district made out during the recent early snow storm. The Chief said we had a lot of bent trees, but no major issues.

Louise made a motion to accept the Chief’s report. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

Eric reported that the 1st Annual Harmony Fire Department Halloween Party was held on October 30th. About 40 kids attended and everyone had a great time. Some discussion followed about permissions needed to publish photos from events. Ray asked Kim about the departments Facebook page. She said she has been posting items here and there, event notices and some crew photos. She also added the Facebook logo to our Christmas Tree Lighting Flyer that will be

published in the Bargain Buyer. This way residents can look for us and “Like” us. The Association is also working on creating a e-mailing list to easily inform residents of upcoming events and the department. A form will be put out at the Tree Lighting for residents to sign-up.

A committee is working on an Association By-Laws review. They are hoping to have any amendments ready to be voted on at their Annual Meeting in May.

There is a department clothing order going out, if anyone would like to place an order please see Captain David Plante whom is coordinating it. The stock on hand at the station will be replenished.

Eric is looking for more ways for our crew to become more active in the community. George suggested that he contact Judy Branch at the Gloucester Department of Human Services.

UPCOMING EVENT: HFD Annual Christmas Tree Lighting
Sunday after Thanksgiving 11/27 from 4-6pm
Santa arrives at 5:00 pm

George made a motion to accept the Association’s report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. - Committee Reports:

- a. Policies & Procedures Manual – Milton, Chair
The project is still a work in progress. Not being as time sensitive other projects have taken away from its completion. The anticipated distribution of the manual would be at the district annual meeting in June. The project is open to any input.
- b. Broadband Work Team – Milton & Stephen Kut, Co-Chairs
John Visich is working on a rough draft of the proposed project. Milt stated that the Rough Draft is very well written. Servicing First Responders and having the elderly and at-risk people being the starting point for the project, but also touching the community in general. We need to look at technical architecture or who is going to serve up all of this data out there, the approach to training and who is the focus or “use cases”. The budget is good for a start. Ray said that should we get this grant it would be a starting point and then there would be all sorts of way to add outside money for individual projects. Private foundations and such would step up to be part of the projects. Ray also wanted to stress that time is of the essence with this project coming through. Milt asked him what he thought the time line was. Ray suggested that they put together a 3-4 page proposal. Milt stated that they are just about there already. There are just some answers that the RIEDC wants us to provide, that we need to complete the grant proposal. Further discussion about the grant followed

At the January meeting Steve Kut and Chris Fusaro will make an Activ board presentation of the GIS portion of the project.

IX. - Old Business:

- a. Update on RIDOT proposed Roadwork in Harmony.
A letter had been received from the RI DOT. The next issue will be to make sure

there is funding for the project in the next budget. George asked if there was any movement on the cross walk issue. The Chief said there had not. Their response was that there needed to be a study done for a “new” installation. Kim stated in the letter she had sent that it was the repainting of an “existing” installation. Copies of the correspondence were given to the board by Kim. Some discussion followed regarding the failure of response by RI DOT to our districts requests.

b. Gloucester Public Safety Commission – “Speed Tables”

The Chief stated that the speed tables have been removed and this item can now be removed from future agendas.

Jim asked about the status of the district website. Has the new site been launched? The Chief replied that we have been trying to work on it, but with limited time due to many on going projects it is coming along slowly. Ray asked if Chris Fusaro, our IT consultant, could help us with this. The Chief said he would talk with him about it. Milt said our website might be a good starting point with our Broadband project as well. Some discussion followed about the website creation and its inclusion in the Broadband project. Milt said for Kim to send him the page ideas and he would take a look and see if he can help. Louise suggested approaching the Ponaganset High School Guidance office to see if there might be a student who could help. Kim said she had approached them in the past to no avail, but she could mention it to the Guidance office again.

c. Pathway to Net Zero – Heat & Electricity

Ray stated that there are alternative energy and efficiency funds available. George has already done the RISE study, now the next step would be to bring in an individual to tell us how to get to Net Zero. Milt asked what Net Zero meant. Ray stated that it meant you pay nothing for your energy bill. Discussion followed about Net Zero. Ray stated that the Ponaganset High School may be the first high school in RI to accomplish this. Bob Chu is doing a study of the 52 high schools in the state. He may also do a study for the Harmony Fire District for free. Ray will look into it. George suggested that we also track how the Geo Thermal project proceeds at the Gloucester Town Hall. That may be of interest to us as well.

X. - New Business:

George brought up a subject that had been talked about in the past, station expansion and an abutting property review was brought up. Ray agreed he said that this property needs to be expanded for the long haul. It will be a plan that needs to be looked at carefully. A public hearing would need to be held. It would be good timing to coordinate this with the RI DOT project, for any roadway changes. Foundations could also be approached for property acquisition. Ray suggested that at the next Annual Meeting a vote should be made to give the district authorization to move on these items so it could be done quickly. George agreed stating that we should be ready. Louise asked if we still had the open line of credit, so we would have cash available to do this. Ray replied yes we do have the open line of credit, but it was only established for cash flow purposes. After some discussion the Moderator called for a motion to create a work team to look into the matter further. Milt suggested that a realtor should be brought in as part of a work team.

Milt made the motion to create the Property Review Work Team to be Co-Chaired by George and Louise. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

XI. - Public Input: No audience.

XII. – Executive Session: None called.

XIII. – Adjournment:

Louise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Milt seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The October meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:18 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board
is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, January 19, 2012** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Secretary